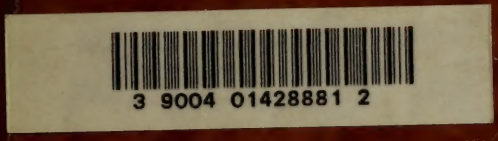
THE CHOICE OF THE CAPITAL
REMINISCENCES

By R. W. SCOTT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OF THE SELECTION OF OTTAWA AS
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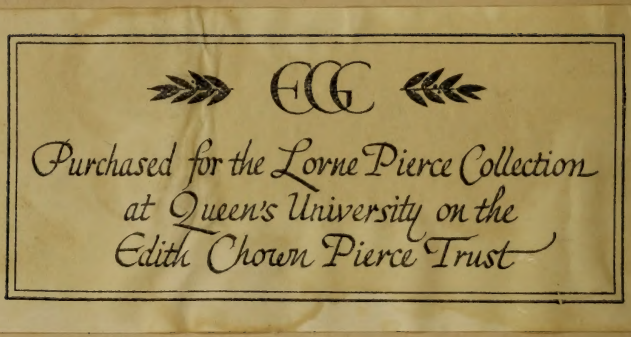
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J.

KINGSTON.

It must always form an important page in the history of Canada and be of special interest to Canadians to recall the circumstances that led up to the selection of Ottawa as the seat of Government of the northern half of the North American continent, a country destined to be the home of 50,000,000 of free and progressive people, proud of their origin, firm in their resolve to remain a part of the British Empire, and destined at no distant period to be its main prop outside of the United Kingdom.

The object of the present paper is to note the circumstances that secured for this city a pre-eminence in which its citizens naturally feel a just pride, for while Quebec, Kingston, Montreal and Toronto had each in turn enjoyed the honour of being for a time the Capital of Canada, the seat of government of the Dominion was eventually fixed at Ottawa.

To give a detailed report of the speeches that were delivered from time to time by the champions of the several competing cities and to print the numerous division lists of the many legislatures in their vain effort to reach an agreement on this vexed question, would fill a good sized quarto volume.

The purpose of the present narrative is to condense the history of the numerous changes in the seat of Government until finally it was the good fortune of Ottawa to receive the much coveted honour. The writer looks back with much satisfaction to the opportunity given him to bear

a small share in the contest for Ottawa's ascendancy,—having in 1857 drafted the memorial to Her late Majesty Queen Victoria setting forth the reasons that should influence her judgment in favour of Ottawa and, subsequently, as member for the city, having taken part in shaping the policy that was adopted in 1859, in order to secure a reversal of the adverse vote of the Legislative Assembly which, in the session of 1858 by a vote of 64 to 50, had declared that "in the opinion of this House the City of Ottawa ought not to be the permanent seat of Government of this Province," thus curtly setting aside Her Majesty's decision.

Quebec continued to be the capital of Canada after its cession to Britain up to the year 1791, when an Imperial Act was passed dividing the Province into two separate parts to be called Upper and Lower Canada. By section 13 it was declared that His Majesty might direct the Governor of each Province to summon the Legislature where he thought fit. No change was made in the Capital of Lower Canada. In the sister province the Legislature was first convened to meet at Newark now Niagara-on-the-Lake. Subsequently the capital was removed to Toronto where it remained until the passing, in the year 1840, of the Imperial Act to reunite the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

By section 11 of that Act the Governor was authorized by an instrument under the Great Seal from time to time to summon and call the Legislature to meet for the despatch of business at such place as he was advised. Accordingly Lord Sydenham convened the first Parliament to meet at Kingston on the 14th June, 1841.

This step was keenly felt by the inhabitants of Lower Canada, who had hoped that the Capital would be either Montreal or Quebec, both of which, as compared with Kingston, were large towns. The pressure from Upper Canada on this point, however, was overwhelming, and the Governor acceded to it. In fact Upper Canada would not assent to or even seriously entertain the scheme of a union of the Provinces, unless upon the express understanding

that the capital should be in Upper Canada. This being conceded it was desirable to place the seat of Government as near the Lower Province as possible and Kingston was the nearest town affording anything like suitable accommodation. The selection was, however, more acceptable to the Lower Canadians than that of any other town in Upper Canada would have been, though they would, of course, have infinitely preferred Montreal or Quebec. The people of Kingston hailed the arrangement with joy, and looked on it as final—but it was not so to be.

Early in the very first session measures were taken to test the sense of the House on the selection of Kingston.

On the 23rd August, 1841, the petition of J. S. Baldwin and others of Toronto was presented praying the House to petition Her Majesty to cause the Parliament of Canada to meet alternately at Toronto and Quebec, or remunerate those cities for the great loss they will otherwise sustain. The subject was referred to a Committee.

On September 1st the Committee to which the matter was referred reported that having maturely considered the proposition therein set forth for the alternative assembling of the Legislature at Quebec and Toronto; and being fully impressed with the conviction that such a measure would not only be acceptable to the great body of the inhabitants of Canada, but would, at the same time, result in a great saving of expenditure to the public, have, in compliance with the prayer of the petition, prepared an Address to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, which they recommend for the adoption of the House, to be transmitted through His Excellency the Governor General, to be laid at the foot of the Throne.

On the 16th September, in the Order of the Day for the consideration of the report of the select Committee on the Seat of Government, the Address to Her Majesty was adopted. 26 for—21 against.

The Address set forth that while the question of the Union was under discussion only two places seemed to offer

any just claims to become the seat of government—Quebec and Toronto. Both had been the Capital of their respective Provinces from the very first. They possessed every necessary convenience, and the great interests which had grown up in each respectively from the fact of their being the seat of Government required favourable consideration.

Among many other reasons urged for assembling Parliament alternately at Quebec and Toronto were the following: "Representatives of Eastern and Western Canada would thus become acquainted with the respective inhabitants; their habits and views, their wants and expectations, and so become able to understand their just desires; and to adopt such measures as would, without violence to any feelings, or even prejudices, transform the two Provinces, in a reasonable time, into one people."

It was also urged that many of the inhabitants of the late provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, relying on the emphatic language of his late Majesty King William the Fourth, "that a union of the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada was not a measure fit to be recommended to Parliament," and therefore not anticipating any such enactment did, under the conviction that Toronto and Quebec would continue the seats of government in their respective provinces, expend the greater part of their means on fixed property, and will, therefore, be impoverished, and many of them exposed to the greatest sacrifices should the seat of government be wholly removed.

Among the members who voted against the alternative system were Derbishire, representing Bytown and Johnston representing Carleton.

In the following session (1842) a despatch was received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies explaining that Her Majesty was unwilling to make a choice of the seat of government of Canada unless Parliament pledged itself to provide funds for the erection of public buildings.

Among several resolutions that were voted on in that

year in connection with the seat of Government were the following:—

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is the undoubted prerogative of the Crown, and conformable to the positive enactment of the Statute of the Imperial Parliament of the United Kingdom, under which this House is constituted and assembled, that "the place or places, within any part of the Province of Canada, for holding each and every session of the Legislative Council and Assembly," should be fixed under the authority of the Crown.

That resolution was carried unanimously.

A second resolution read as follows:—

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that the building in which the Legislative Assembly is now held, and which was erected several years ago, for a different purpose, does not afford sufficient accommodation to enable the members to discharge their duty to their constituents with due enquiry, and sufficient deliberation, and that the locality of Kingston is not central to the majority of the population, and is badly provided with accommodation for the residence of the members particularly during winter, which is the season in which they can attend to their Legislative duties, with the smallest sacrifice to their general interests.

On the question of concurrence arising Mr. Boulton moved, in amendment to the said resolution,

That it is the opinion of this House that Toronto is preferable to Kingston as a place at which to convene the Legislature of this Province.

Yeas 12—Nays 51.

It was then moved in amendment to the resolution

That as Kingston does not afford the necessary accommodation and the requisite facilities for the seat of government, this House is respectfully of opinion that the seat of Government should be removed to Quebec.

Lost on division.

On an amendment being moved that the seat of government should be removed to Montreal it was also negatived.

Mr. Johnston, member for the County of Carleton, then moved, in amendment to the said second resolution, seconded by Mr. Derbishire, member for Bytown, that all the words

after "resolved" be struck out and the following substituted:

That it is the opinion of this House that Bytown is preferable to Quebec, as regards the seat of Government.

Yeas 6—Nays 57.

The yeas were Cameron, Derbyshire, Forbes, Johnston, D. McDonald and J. S. Macdonald.

It was then moved by Sir Allan MacNab, seconded by Mr. Cartwright,

That as the buildings in Kingston do not afford sufficient accommodation to enable the members of the Council and Assembly to discharge their duties to their constituents and the Province at large, that the House recommends that measures should be adopted during the recess of the Legislature to remove this inconvenience.

Yeas 21—Nays 40.

A vote was then taken on the original resolution:—

That Kingston is not central to the majority of the population, &c. See above.

Carried 40 to 21.

On this division the members for the town of Bytown and County of Carleton voted nay.

In the subsequent session (1843) the agitation on the seat of government still continued.

On the 2nd November Attorney General Baldwin moved, seconded by Attorney General Lafontaine,

That it is the opinion of the House that it is expedient that the seat of government for this Province should be at the City of Montreal.

To that motion an amendment was moved:—

That the House representing so many and such varied and conflicting interests is persuaded that any decision it may come to on the question of establishing the seat of Government in this Province will be unsatisfactory to the great sections thereof, whose interests may be felt to be compromised thereby, and that in the opinion of this House, the whole province will more cheerfully acquiesce in the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure on the subject, unfettered by any opinion of the Legislature.

For the amendment: Yeas 29—Nays 50.

An amendment was next moved

That it is the opinion of this House that for the present Kingston is a proper and suitable place for the seat of the Provincial Government.

An amendment to that amendment was then moved

That the word "Kingston" in the said motion be struck out and the following substituted "some place within the limits of Upper Canada."

Yeas 27—Nays 52.

On the question of the first amendment: Yeas 26—Nays 54.

After a hot debate the original motion declaring that it is expedient that the seat of Government should be at Montreal was then carried 51 to 27.

Derbishire, Bytown's representative, voted yea, and Johnston, Carleton's representative, voted nay.

It was then moved by Attorney General Baldwin, seconded by Attorney General Lafontaine,

That upon Her Majesty, in the gracious exercise of Her Royal prerogative, giving directions for the location of the seat of the Provincial Government of this Province in the City of Montreal, this House pledges itself to provide the necessary supply for the expenditure which may be expected to attend upon the establishment of the seat of government in that City.

Yeas 55—Nays 22.

Derbishire voting yea, Johnston nay.

On the 4th November, 1843, a message from His Excellency was delivered to the House in answer to the resolution adopted in October, 1842, setting forth that it was the prerogative of the Crown to fix the place for holding every session of the Legislative Council and Assembly. The message read as follows:—

The Governor General informs the Honourable the Legislative Council, in reply to their address on the subject of the place where the Legislature is in future to assemble in this Province, that he does not consider himself at liberty to lay before that Honourable House, the despatches which he received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State on that subject; but that the substance of the instructions

issued to him is to the effect that Her Majesty's Government decline coming to a determination in favour of any place as the future seat of government without the advice of the Provincial Legislature ; and that Her Majesty's Ministers will be prepared to submit favourably to Her Majesty, such addresses on this subject as may be presented by either or both of the Legislative Houses, in recommendation of either Kingston or Montreal; it being understood that the selection is now necessarily limited to one of those places; the former capitals, Quebec and Toronto, being alike too remote from the centre of the Province, and the plan of alternative sessions at one or the other places being deemed objectionable and impracticable, on account of its manifest and extreme inconvenience. As connected with this subject, the Governor General transmits a copy of a report from the Committee of the Executive Council, and a copy of a protest from one of its members, on the subject thereof, which were submitted for the consideration of Her Majesty's Ministers.

Following the message from His Excellency there was laid on the Table a report of the Executive Council acquiesced in by all of its members except Mr. Harrison, then Provincial Secretary. The report is very lengthy and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the several cities and towns that claim the honour of being the capital.

The Minute of Council sets forth the objections to Kingston, Toronto and Quebec.

Of Bytown it states that its inland position, on the boundary river between the late Provinces, and at the mouth of the great military canal of the Rideau, are said to give it a claim to consideration above other places because it would be comparatively safe in case of war and convenient alike for Upper and Lower Canadians. It further states that when the country of the Ottawa comes to be settled, it promises to rise into importance, but that its position on the Provincial boundary makes it inconvenient for both Upper and Lower Canadians; it is in fact out of the way of both; and thus possessing disadvantages which would be equally felt by both divisions of the Province, it would probably unite both in one feeling, and that not in its favour.

The Minute of Council contained the following recommendation:—

And should your Excellency be pleased to agree in the recommendation of the Committee, and should Her Majesty be advised to concur in the measure of fixing the capital at Montreal, the Committee think that facilities for a very early removal of the Government thither can be found in that city, and the accommodation offered by its extent and position, as well as by the possession of public property there, available for the uses of the Government.

II.

MONTREAL.

On the 28th of November, in the following year, 1844, Parliament met in the City of Montreal in accordance with the following despatch:—

No. 132. DOWNING STREET,
2nd December, 1843.

SIR,—

I have laid before the Queen, the joint address of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Canada, in Provincial Parliament assembled, enclosed in your despatch of the 10th November, 1843, No. 123, in which the Houses of the Provincial Parliament submit to the Queen their opinion, that it is expedient, that the seat of Her Majesty's Provincial Government for Canada should be at the City of Montreal, and assure Her Majesty that upon Her Majesty, in the gracious exercise of her Royal prerogative, giving directions for the location of it at that place, the Houses pledge themselves to provide the necessary supply for the expenditure which may be expected to attend the establishment of the seat of Government at that City.

The Queen having taken this Address into her consideration, and adverting to the terms of the Act of the Imperial Parliament for reuniting the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and for the Government of Canada, has been pleased to command me to instruct you, to acquaint the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Canada, that, in compliance with their express wish and opinion, it is Her Majesty's pleasure that the City of Montreal be henceforward the place of the habitual residence of yourself and your successors in the Government of Canada; and that it is Her Majesty's further pleasure, that the future sessions of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province, be holden at Montreal, subject, of course, to the strict observance of the provisions of the statute already mentioned, respecting the selection of the proper place or places for that purpose.

The Queen is further pleased to direct you to acquaint the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, that Her Majesty accepts their offer of providing the necessary supplies for the expenditure which may be attendant on this measure, and will give the necessary

orders for ensuring the effective and economical application of any such funds in executing the service for which they may be so appropriated.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) STANLEY.

The Right Honourable
Sir Charles Metcalfe, Baronet,
G.C.B., &c., &c.

During the four following years Montreal enjoyed the honour of being the Capital of Canada. The choice had been made by a vote of nearly two to one in the Legislative Assembly; the moneys had been voted for the erection of the necessary buildings; Her Majesty had approved of the selection and that city would no doubt have continued for all time to be the capital of the present Dominion but for the events of which the following is a brief narrative largely taken from the account given by Mr. John Charles Dent in "The Last Forty Years: Canada Since the Union of 1841."

The session of 1849 was one of the most memorable in Canadian annals, not only by reason of much important legislation, but from the startling and disastrous events whereby it was characterized. Parliament met on the 18th January, and one of the first measures introduced was a bill granting a general amnesty for those engaged in the Rebellion of a dozen years before. This encountered no serious opposition. Another was the famous Rebellion Losses Bill, a further legacy of the troubles of 1837–38.

It followed on and brought to completion a long line of legislative enactments, beginning in 1838, immediately after the close of the rebellion. It was, moreover, a logical consequence of that legislation and of the policy of the previous Conservative Government. It provided for the compensating of those who had suffered losses arising from the total or partial, unjust, unnecessary or wanton destruction of property. It was provided that none of the persons who had been convicted of treason during the rebellion, or who having been committed to custody, had submitted to Her Majesty's will, and been transported to Bermuda should be

entitled to an indemnity. It met with furious opposition from the Upper Canadian Conservatives, who contended, as was no doubt true, that not a tithe of those concerned in the rebellion had been convicted or banished and that there was nothing to prevent any of those persons from receiving compensation. The excitement spread and the whole country was soon in a ferment.

With regard to this measure and the excitement which it aroused, Mr. Dent says:—

> It must at once be conceded that the Rebellion Losses Bill of 1849 was a wise and statesmanlike measure:—A measure calculated to dissolve long-standing prejudices, and to heal old wounds which had not yet closed. There had been much wanton and cruel destruction of property during the rebellion. After the lapse of so many years it was not always easy to decide whether the person aggrieved had been an actual rebel or not. Moreover a full amnesty had just been granted, and it would have been most injudicious to partially nullify that act of clemency by discriminating between claimants unless where the latter had been regularly convicted by due course of law. To have done so would have been to open the way to many evil consequences, of which perjury and detraction would have been among the greatest.

The debates on the subject were the most exciting in our Parliamentary annals, the Opposition putting forth all their strength in their efforts to defeat the bill, and the discussion becoming very bitter on both sides. The bill, however, passed the Assembly by a majority of forty-seven to eighteen, and the Legislative Council by a majority of twenty to fourteen. The Governor General, Lord Elgin, notwithstanding a host of adverse petitions, asking for the disallowance or reservation of the bill, followed the only course reasonably open to him under the constitution, and on the 25th April, 1849, gave the Royal assent to the measure.

This was immediately followed by rioting, which it is to be hoped will always remain unique in the annals of Canada. It is needless to describe here the disgraceful scenes in detail. They are matter of history. Suffice it to say that the Parliament Buildings were first wrecked and then burned to the ground, involving the destruction of a valuable library and

of public records of priceless value. Her Majesty's representative was repeatedly pelted with rotten eggs, stones and other missiles. Much private property was also destroyed; but owing to the remarkable forbearance of the Government and its followers, the latter forming, of course, the great majority of Montreal's population, only one life was sacrificed. Nor was the rioting a mere momentary ebullition of wrath. A month later excitement still ran so high that Lord Elgin was unable to personally attend the prorogation of Parliament; and as late as the 15th August, nearly four months after the first outbreak, serious rioting was again indulged in.

In the meantime the Governor had been importuned from many quarters to remove the seat of Government from Montreal; and the Assembly, before the close of the session, had passed an Address praying him to call Parliament alternately in Toronto and Quebec every four years.

During the debate on the Address several amendments were proposed, among others one by Mr. John A. Macdonald, setting forth the claims of Kingston, and recommending His Excellency to convene the Legislature at that place. The next amendment enlarged upon the suitability of Bytown. Both amendments were defeated, but even at that early period Bytown received a larger vote than Kingston. The rioting of August convinced both the Governor and his ministers that it would be inadvisable to retain the seat of government at Montreal. Many members of Parliament, indeed, had declared before prorogation that nothing would induce them to return thither for another session. But the question was not definitely settled until October, when, pursuant to the expressed wish of the Legislature, it was decided that the remaining two sessions of the existing Parliament should be held in Toronto, and that thereafter the seat of government should be located alternately at Quebec and Toronto, changing every four years. The decision thus arrived at was intended as a salutary lesson, not only to Montreal, but to other towns which had shown a disposition to set the populace above the law.

Early in September, nearly two months before the decision just referred to was arrived at, His Excellency took advantage of an official visit to Niagara (where he met and conferred with General Zachary Taylor, then President of the United States, with regard to the projected reciprocity treaty) to make a tour of Upper Canada. There can be no doubt that one of the chief objects of this tour was to test the feeling of the various towns with a view to the selection of a permanent capital. This will be the more evident from the following extracts from a letter written by the Attorney General West, the Hon. Robert Baldwin, to an intimate friend in Toronto under date of 8th September, 1849:—

I wrote you a short note the day before yesterday, informing you of the departure of his Excellency, and of his intention of going to the Falls at once, in order to try and meet General Taylor, who was expected there immediately. I think the citizens of Montreal are becoming very uneasy about the seat of government question. They have reason to be, for certainly the late renewal of disturbances cannot be considered as increasing their claims to favourable consideration. They were in great hopes his Excellency would have come to town before he went west. His not having done so strikes them as perhaps an indication that he does not mean to come back to them at all. It is true they half flatter themselves that he is going home. Sir Allan has talked oracularly, I suppose, to them on the subject in his letters, and, like all dupes, they interpret the oracle to their own liking. They will be miserably disappointed if that is all they have to rely upon for the preservation of their metropolitan position. They have some doubts themselves, and are doing all they can to get the people in the west to play their game by insulting the Governor General there, and are particularly anxious that he should be ill-received at Toronto, Kingston and Bytown. I have reason to believe they are making the most strenuous exertions to accomplish this, appealing to their friends not to desert them, etc., etc. The question then is, will they succeed in getting their friends to make the attempt, and if they do, will the lovers of order of all parties allow it to be successful? If they do, the Montrealers will have reason to chuckle over the gullibility of their western friends. For it is not to be denied that should the Government determine on a removal from Montreal, the regard for order and respect for the representative of the Sovereign that the different places in Upper Canada may show on the occasion of his Excellency's visit will have a powerful effect in determining the particular place to remove to. In fact, what

could I say if, after urging the claims of Toronto, all my previous assurances that *there*, at all events, such insults would either not be offered, or would be put down at once, were to be met by an appeal to recent facts contradicting them? . . . . The people of Kingston are more wise. I saw a letter from a gentleman there a day or two ago, in which it was said that, particularly since the return of their delegates from England, they are, all parties of them, setting to work to ensure his Excellency a good reception. They say they were misled by their Parliamentary representatives telling them that Lord Elgin had little or no influence in England, and that he would be sure to be recalled. I suppose they are now undeceived in these particulars. Be that as it may, they are at work in earnest, and unless Toronto is equally active and determined, farewell to her hopes. Apart from all other considerations, I am of course, as a Torontonian, most anxious that my native city should not lose the chance that has been thrown in her way of sharing, at least, in metropolitan honours and advantages. And I would willingly do all in my power consistently with my duty to the Province at large to secure her that advantage. . . . . Depend upon it, the time is now or never.

During the entire tour His Excellency was attended only by an aide-de-camp and one servant, his object being to prove that he could travel the Province in safety without any body-guard for his protection. The result fully justified his expectations. He met with enthusiasm everywhere, and only on two or three occasions was there any manifestation of hostility, and that but trifling. How far the knowledge that the question of the location of the seat of government was hanging in the balance contributed to this result can only be conjectured. But, sad to relate, neither that, nor loyalty to the Sovereign nor the respect due to Her representative weighed with the opponents of the Baldwin-Lafontaine administration at Bytown. As will presently appear they were determined, cost what it might, to make it plain that notwithstanding His Excellency's desire to come, Bytown could not be included in the Viceregal itinerary.

As early as the middle of August it was reported that Lord Elgin intended to visit Bytown in the course of his contemplated tour of Upper Canada. In view of this several leading citizens of the town, moderate Conservatives as well as Reformers resolved to leave no stone unturned to ensure

for His Excellency a unanimous and enthusiastic welcome. With this end in view a deputation composed of gentlemen of both parties waited upon Mr. William Stewart, the chosen candidate of the British American League for the representation of the town at the next general election, and pointed out to him the desirability of ensuring for Her Majesty's representative, from the whole population, the reception due to his office. The British American League was a Conservative political organization then recently formed, one of the objects of which was the keeping up of the agitation against the Government with respect to the Rebellion Losses Act. The deputation submitted to Mr. Stewart the draft of a non-political address to His Excellency, of a character calculated not to give offence to any party, and offered to undertake that in the event of the reception being arranged, it would not be the occasion of any political demonstration on the part of the friends of the Government. Mr. Stewart very properly replied that it would be necessary to submit the proposals to his supporters and a meeting of the League was accordingly called for the purpose of considering them. The proceedings at this meeting are said to have been of a somewhat stormy character, and not calculated to reassure those who were endeavouring to arrange for the reception; and the project, in consequence, for the time being fell to the ground.

Early in September, when His Excellency started on his tour, the first place he visited was Kingston. Sheriff Fraser of Carleton, a prominent Conservative, who happened to be in Kingston at the time, as a result of information conveyed to him, immediately wrote to Mr. Harvey, Mayor of Bytown, also a prominent Conservative, and to a prominent Liberal, stating that His Excellency had expressed a wish to pay more than a passing visit to the town, on account of what he had been told of the beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood and urging them to make suitable preparations for a fitting reception. The Reformers were greatly pleased at what they took to be an invitation from their political op-

ponents to fraternal action and a number of them, of whom the writer was one, at once got up a requisition to the mayor as numerously and influentially signed as possible, asking him to call a public meeting to be held at the North Ward market (now By Ward) on the Saturday following for the purpose of adopting an address for presentation to His Excellency and of arranging for extending to him a fitting welcome. This the mayor declined to do, taking the ground that it was for him to choose the time and place of meeting. In view of this, those who were in charge of the matter, realizing that the mayor was hostile, and deeming it now too late to withdraw, requested Messrs. Sparrow and Turgeon, two of the town magistrates, to call the meeting, which they accordingly did, for Monday the 17th of September at 2 p.m., at the North Ward market. Scarcely was this proclamation placarded when another was published by the mayor calling a meeting in the West Ward (now Wellington Ward) market for the following Wednesday. The West Ward was the stronghold of the opponents of the Government, as the North Ward was of its friends, and Wednesday was fair day when the town would be crowded with country people, many of them bitterly hostile to the Governor General. It was therefore apparent to all that the attempts at securing unanimity had proved abortive; that the Conservatives had no intention of uniting with the Liberals in the proposed reception; and that under such circumstances the Governor would not visit the town. However, it being now too late to recede from their position, the supporters of the Government prepared for submission to the meeting called at their instance a resolution dealing with certain local improvements, the bringing about of which it was desirable to urge on the Government, and in which all classes of citizens had a common interest, and a non-political, inoffensive address for presentation to His Excellency. The task of moving one of the resolutions was entrusted to the writer. In view of the calling of the rival meeting by the mayor the Reformers naturally sup-

posed that the attendance at Monday's gathering would be confined to the members of their own party and that the proceedings would go off without opposition, the Conservatives reserving whatever resolutions they might desire to have adopted for their own meeting two days later. In this they were, unfortunately, mistaken.

Promptly at 2 o'clock the meeting was called to order by Mr. Turgeon, one of the magistrates who had issued the proclamation. Mr. Sparrow, the other magistrate, then read the proclamation and nominated Mr. John Scott, the Liberal member of Parliament for Bytown, as chairman. Mr. Edward Malloch, Conservative member for Carleton, nominated Mr. Harvey, the mayor. This was followed by a deafening uproar, in the midst of which Mr. John Scott ascended the platform and joined the others in the endeavour to restore order and to obtain a division on the question of the chairmanship. Several others also stepped up on the platform and joined in the attempt to quiet the crowd when the stand, which had not been constructed to hold so many, gave way and precipitated the occupants to the ground. This of course added to the confusion; the noise grew louder and louder and the efforts of those who were desirous of peace were unavailing. The opposing parties soon came into actual collision; the meeting was broken up, and those who did not fight scattered in all directions. After a few moments of fighting, all in confusion without any weapons other than sticks, stones (with which the market square was unfortunately thickly strewn) were resorted to and presently flew thick as hail. Neither party would appear to have been at first armed; but fire-arms were soon procured. The stone battle (from which the day took the name of "Stony Monday," by which it has ever since been known) lasted about ten minutes and the firing was kept up for fifteen or twenty minutes more, when the arrival of a company of regulars put an end to the fighting. Bytown was then a military post and the first thought of Mayor Harvey, Mr. Sparrow and the moderate men on both sides w en the

fighting began was to call out the troops. The Reformers had been driven from the field early in the fight and while it was in progress or soon afterwards a Conservative meeting was organized with Dr. Hill, President ofthe British American League, in the chair, at which an address was adopted for presentation to the Governor General, in which the action of his ministry was condemned—which necessarily involved a censure of His Excellency, as he had assented to the Act. The casualties were said to have amounted to twenty or thirty, but there was fortunately only one fatality. The victim was an unarmed youth of twenty-one, who had been an innocent spectator of the fight.

The incident proved a very regrettable one as bitter feelings were engendered, intensified by the criminal proceedings that were later adopted, which only served to keep alive the enmity that had unhappily arisen, and which time alone has succeeded in softening. No doubt it were better forgotten; but it is unfortunately part of history and a history of the seat of Government question without some reference to "Stony Monday" would be incomplete. So strong was the feeling against Lord Elgin that his opponents were prepared to sacrifice whatever chance Bytown might have to be selected as the seat of government rather than accord to him as the representative of the Sovereign a respectful welcome. This will be evident from the reference to the matter in the newspapers of the day—Conservative as well as Liberal. For instance the Montreal *Gazette* in its issue of September 22nd remarked editorially: "Our correspondent says that Lord Elgin cannot show his face in Bytown. The people will have nothing of him, one way or another." And in the account of the riot, written by its Bytown correspondent appearing in the *Gazette* of September 20th, the following instructive passage occurs:—

> The "Rads" called a public meeting in which requisition they gave liberty for others than townspeople to assemble to-day at 2 o'clock in the North Ward market place (their stronghold) for the purpose of adopting an address to His Excellency the Governor General in the event of his visit to this place, which they had no

doubt would be the case holding forth as usual the bait of the seat of government being fixed here. This would not do with us, so on Saturday about ten of our party (among whom I was one) went out into the country and acquainted them of what was going on. . . . .

Fortunately the final selection of a permanent Capital was not made until ten years later. Had it been made in 1849 the City of Ottawa would not to-day be enjoying that honour.

III.

TORONTO AND QUEBEC.

During the succeeding two years the Legislature met at Toronto, and the four following years at Quebec. In the meantime Bytown kept alive its early aspirations of being one day the Capital of Canada. This appears by an extract from the address of the writer who was a candidate for parliamentary honours in the year 1854 "It is scarcely necessary to add that I am opposed to the present migratory system of holding Parliament alternately in Quebec and Toronto and will earnestly advocate the eligibility of our own town to be the capital of United Canada."

As on that occasion the contest was a three cornered one, the writer withdrew before the poll opened. The cost and inconvenience of the removal from Quebec to Toronto in the years 1855–6 became so serious that on the 16th April, 1856, Attorney General Drummond moved seconded by the Hon. Mr. Cartier, the following resolution:—

That in order to facilitate the selection of a proper place for the permanent seat of government it is expedient that no place other than one of the cities hereinafter named be selected or proposed for selection as the place where the seat of government is to be permanently fixed, namely: Toronto, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston and Hamilton.

The first vote taken was on Hamilton, to which an amendment was moved substituting Quebec. Amendment carried, 70 to 46.

The next vote was on Toronto, to which an amendment was moved substituting Quebec. Amendment carried, Yeas 71, to 56 Nays.

The next vote named Kingston, to which an amendment was moved in favor of Quebec. For amendment, yeas 67, nays 54.

The next motion proposed was that the word Montreal be left out and the word Quebec inserted—yeas 65, nays 55.

The question being put on the amendment as amended that the word Ottawa be left out and the word Quebec inserted. For amendment, yeas 77, nays 43, Ottawa receiving the smallest vote of the cities proposed.

A vote was subsequently taken on Quebec as the capital which carried 64 to 56.

On 25th June the question again came up on the resolution to grant £50,000 towards the erection of public buildings in Quebec when the struggle again began—the first motion being to rescind the resolution in favour of Quebec and naming Montreal, and on an amendment to that amendment inserting the words the "City of Ottawa" instead of the City of Montreal the vote stood 19 for Ottawa and 74 against.

Finally the resolution appropriating the £50,000 towards the public buildings at Quebec was carried in the Assembly by, yeas 50, nays 46.

On the motion for the second reading of the Supply Bill in the Legislative Council the following Resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That this House not having been consulted on the subject of the fixing of any place for the permanent seat of government of this Province, and the other branch of the Legislature having resolved upon Quebec as such permanent seat of government, and having moreover passed a Bill of Supply making provision for erecting public buildings at Quebec, this House feels itself imperatively called upon to declare that it cannot concur in the said Bill of Supply.

Because, moreover, this House did, on the 25th day of April, 1855, adopt an address to His Excellency the Governor General, praying that His Excellency would be pleased, in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, to fix permanently upon some convenient place for the annual assembling of Parliament; and, assuring His Excellency of the cheerful concurrence of this House in any proposition His Excellency might think fit to make, for the appropriation of public money for the erection of suitable buildings for the accommodation of the three branches of the Legislature at the place which might be so fixed upon by His Excellency.

Another Supply Bill omitting the £50,000 for public buildings was then introduced in the Assembly and carried by both Houses.

It will be observed that in the many divisions on the seat of government question Ottawa had fewer advocates than any other city. On the last occasion in 1857 receiving only 11 votes in a House of 130. Toronto had three members in the Government interested in its success: The Hon. Wm. Cayley, Inspector General; Spence, Postmaster General, and J. C. Morrison, Receiver General. Kingston was represented by the Premier, Sir John A. Macdonald, Quebec had Alleyn, Minister of Public Works. Montreal always possessed a strong party in its favour.

An opportunity offered in the latter part of the year 1856 for strengthening the position of Ottawa: the Hon. P. M. VanKoughnet had been appointed President of the Council succeeding Sir Allan MacNab. At the time Mr. VanKoughnet was not a member of either branch of the Legislature, and though residing and practising law at Toronto he was originaly from Cornwall. An opportunity occurred of finding a seat for him in the East. At that time the Legislative Council was elective, and the Rideau division embracing Ottawa, Carleton and Renfrew, was entitled to elect a member for the Upper House. In the fall of that year it occurred to the writer that it would be a good stroke of policy to invite Mr. VanKoughnet to offer for the Rideau division. Accordingly the writer visited Toronto and submitted the proposition to Mr. VanKoughnet who promised to consider the suggestion and come to Ottawa and discuss the subject at an early day with the leading citizens. A meeting was shortly after called and Mr. VanKoughnet was invited to address it. The impression he made upon the audience was so favourable that he was invited to stand for the division with the strong support of the late W. F. Powell then representing Carleton, the Hon. James Skead and Edward Griffin, the latter up to that time being recognized as the candidate in the Eastern part of the division in opposition to Edward Malloch, who had previously represented Carleton and to Mr. Moffatt of Pembroke. After a laborious canvass of the division Messrs. Malloch and Moffatt retired

on nomination day influenced no doubt by the belief that, having a representative in the Government, Ottawa's chances would be improved.

In the following year, 1857, another opportunity occurred of adding to Ottawa's influence. In the general election of that year the Hon. Wm. Cayley was defeated in Huron and as it was important for the Government to secure a seat for him before calling the session in 1858, it was suggested that we should endeavour to provide him a seat in the Ottawa district. Mr. McDougall of Renfrew, father of the recent Auditor General, had been elected for Renfrew, and the writer undertook to see that gentleman and obtain his views. After discussing the subject with Mr. McDougall he recognized the great interest at stake and consented to resign if his supporters approved of the proposition. The writer continued on to Pembroke, then to Eganville making a tour of the county and seeing the leading men. Differences of opinion prevailed among them, but finally Mr. McDougall consented to make the sacrifice and retire in favour of Mr. Cayley who was then elected giving the Ottawa district two members in the Government who could be relied upon to see that Ottawa's interests were not sacrificed.

IV.

THE QUEEN'S CHOICE.

The attempts made in the session of 1856 to reach an agreement on the selection of a permanent seat of government having failed, in the early part of the succeeding session (1857) the Government submitted the following resolution:—

To The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.

May it please Your Majesty,

We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty for the purpose of representing:—

That the interests of Canada require that the seat of the Provincial Government should be fixed at some certain place.

That we have resolved to appropriate the sums requisite for providing the necessary Buildings and accommodation for the Government and the Legislature, at such place as Your Majesty may see fit to select.

And we therefore humbly pray Your Majesty to be graciously pleased to exercise the Royal Prerogative by the selection of some one place as the permanent seat of government of Canada.

An amendment was then submitted declaring that it is inexpedient to discuss the question, the question having been already decided last session.—Yeas 44, nays 68.

Amendments were then offered, first, for Montreal as the permanent seat—Yeas 39, nays 75.

Next for Ottawa—Yeas 11, nays 100.

Kingston—Yeas 28, nays 84.

Next for Toronto—Yeas 30, nays 81.

After sundry other amendments to postpone or defeat the Address, it was carried 61 to 50.

A motion to restrict Her Majesty's choice to the three central cities—Montreal, Ottawa and Kingston—was supported only by the mover and seconder.

In transmitting the Address to Her Majesty, His Excellency, Sir Edmund Head, expressed the opinion that it would be improper for him to convey any advice or opinion upon this matter. Shortly after the following circular was addressed to the mayors of Toronto, Montreal, Kingston, Ottawa and Quebec:

[Copy] Circular.

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

Toronto, C.W., March 28, 1857.

SIR:—

You are probably aware that the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Canada have addressed Her Most Gracious Majesty to exercise Her Prerogative in the selection of a permanent seat of government for the whole Province.

In the event of Her Majesty complying with the prayer of these Addresses, His Excellency is anxious that Her Advisers in England should be enabled to place before Her a full and fair statement of the claim of each separate City, which may be considered a candidate for the honor of becoming the future Capital of Canada.

As a matter of course, the final selection must depend on a comprehensive survey of the interests, not of any one place, but of the whole Province, as part of British North America.

The claims, however, of each City are likely to be stated by the persons most interested in supporting them better than they would be by any other party.

His Excellency therefore invites the Corporation of..... to cause to be prepared a paper setting forth the reasons which may in their opinion favor the claim of that place to be selected by The Queen.

With every wish to afford full time for preparing these statements, His Excellency desires that they may be in the hands of the Colonial Secretary by the first week of July in the present year.

You will please, if you see fit to comply with His Excellency's desire, to address the packet to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, London, and endorse it with the words "City of....., Canada.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) R. T. PENNEFATHER,

Governor's Secretary.

TO HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF TORONTO,

MONTREAL, KINGSTON, OTTAWA AND QUEBEC.

On the 4th May the following answer was received from the Colonial Secretary:—

DOWNING STREET, 17th April, 1857.

SIR:—

I have to acknowledge your despatch, No. 49, of the 28th ultimo, forwarding Addresses from the Legislative Council and Assembly of Canada, praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to exercise the Royal Prerogative by the selection of some place for the permanent Seat of Government in Canada.

I understand the object of these Addresses to be the selection of some fitting place at which under all ordinary circumstances the Legislature of the Province should henceforth be called together, and where the necessary public buildings may be provided for that purpose, as well as for the general administration of the affairs of Canada.

I have to inform you that Her Majesty, on the advice of Her Ministers, and fully weighing the importance of the reference thus made to Her by the Legislative Council and Assembly of Canada, has been graciously pleased to comply with the prayer of these memorials.

I shall await the further information which your despatch promises, and in particular the replies which may be received to the Circular which you have addressed to the Mayors of the several Cities, before taking any further steps to initiate the necessary examination into the relative advantages of the places indicated, for the information of Her Majesty.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) H. LABOUCHERE.

GOVERNOR SIR EDMUND HEAD, Baronet, &c., &c., &c.

On receipt of the circular letter from the Secretary of the Governor General a special committee of the Ottawa City Council was appointed to take charge of the important subject, and leading citizens were invited to prepare addresses to Her Majesty. Three persons only responded to the invitation:—His Honour Judge Armstrong, the late H. J. Friel, Esquire, who for several years was mayor of the city, and the writer. The address drafted by the writer was considered the most effective and was accordingly adopted by the Committee. The text of it, together with that of the answer, will be found in the appendix. The late Mr. David Scott, who for many years represented one of the

western wards in the City Council was selected to engross the address after which it was duly signed by the late J. B. Lewis as mayor and the late William P. Lett, who for many years was city clerk, and was duly forwarded to the Colonial Office in accordance with the instructions. Several of the rival cities appointed deputations to proceed to England and advocate before Her Majesty the claims of their respective localities to be the permanent seat of Government. Kingston sent Thos. Kirkpatrick and John Forsyth, Esquires, two of its leading citizens; Quebec delegated the mayor and Mr. U. J. Tessier to represent the many advantages the ancient capital offered. Ottawa rested its case entirely on the facts set forth in the memorial prepared by the writer.

It is, however, not improbable that we had the friendly aid of Lady Head, wife of the then Governor General. She and His Excellency took a trip to England in that year having previously paid a visit to Ottawa, where they were entertained at a luncheon under canvas on Major's Hill, near the site of the chateau built by Colonel By. The writer had the honour of presiding and availed himself of the opportunity to point out to Lady Head the attractive surroundings—Barrack hill in the foreground clothed in beautiful foliage, and the sloping green bank on the opposite side of the river where the little frame shantymen's chapel stood surrounded by trees. The day was bright with a clear atmosphere, affording a fine view of the Chaudiere Falls before the lumber piles had marred the beauty of the landscape. Lady Head was so impressed with the picturesque scenery that she made a sketch of it. Being a bright clever woman and a friend of her late Majesty, the writer has always entertained the belief that the sketch was shown to the Queen, who would naturally have enquired from her as to the eligibility of the city for the seat of government. Though the official announcement that Her Majesty had selected Ottawa was not received till the middle of January, 1858, a private letter from a member of Her Majesty's Household reached

Ottawa some weeks previously stating positively that Ottawa was the Queen's choice. Ottawa having secured the great prize it was thought prudent to offer to provide temporary accommodation for the Legislature and the Government until such time as permanent buildings could be erected, as appears by the following official communication.

Friday, 9th April, 1858.

Mr. Speaker communicated to the House, the following letter, viz.:—

House of Assembly, April 9th, 1858.

Sir:—

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of a Resolution adopted by the City Council of Ottawa. May I request you will bring the same under the notice of the House.

I have the honor to be, &c., &c.,
R. W. SCOTT.

The Honorable the Speaker.

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, in Parliament Assembled.

Gentlemen:—

I beg leave most respectfully to submit, for the consideration of your Honorable body, the subjoined copy of a Resolution passed at a meeting of the Municipal Council of the City of Ottawa, held on Monday, the fifth day of April, 1858.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
EDWARD McGILLIVRAY,
Mayor.

Ottawa, 6th April, 1858.

[Copy]

Resolved, That his Worship the Mayor, be, and he is hereby authorized to communicate to His Excellency the Governor General, in Council, and to both Houses of Parliament, that in order to aid in carrying out the decision of Her Majesty in favour of Ottawa as the seat of government, with the least convenient delay, this Council will furnish the necessary Buildings to accommodate the Legislature and the offices of the Government, until permanent government buildings be erected in this City.

(Sgd.) EDWARD McGILLIVRAY, [L.S.]
Mayor.

Certified.

WILLIAM P. LETT, City Clerk.

It was evident that the feeling among a large proportion of the members of the Assembly was one of disappointment in Her Majesty's choice. Ottawa had invariably received the fewest votes in the many divisions that had accompanied the debates in preceding years and that sentiment found expression on the 28th July, when Mr. Dunkin moved and Mr. Dorion seconded the following proposal:—

That an humble Address be presented to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, to represent that this House humbly prays Her Majesty to reconsider the selection she has been advised to make, of a future Capital of Canada, and to name Montreal as such future capital.

Mr. Brown moved in amendment, seconded by Mr. Chapais,

That all the words after "presented" to the end of the Question, be left out, and the words "to His Excellency the Governor General, "praying that no action may be taken towards the erection of build- "ings in the City of Ottawa, for the permanent accommodation of the "Executive Government and Legislature, or for the removal of the "Public Departments to that City," inserted instead thereof.

Mr. Piché moved, in amendment to the said proposed amendment, seconded by Mr. Bureau,

That the words "an humble Address be presented to His Ex- "cellency the Governor General, praying that no action may be taken "towards the erection of buildings in the City of Ottawa, for the "permanent accommodation of the Executive Government and "Legislature, or for the removal of the Public Departments to that "City," be left out, and the words "in the opinion of this House, "the City of Ottawa ought not to be the permanent seat of Govern- "ment of this Province," inserted instead thereof.

And the question being put on the amendment to the said proposed amendment; the House divided; and the names being called for, they were taken down as follows:—

YEAS.

MESSIEURS

Aikins	Dionne	Laberge	Piché
Baby	Dorion	Langevin	Powell, Walker
Beaubien	Dorland	Lemieux	Price
Biggar	Dubord	Macdonald, D. A.	Robinson
Bourassa	Foley	Macdonald, J. S.	Ross
Brown	Fortier	Mackenzie	Rymal
Bureau	Fournier	Mattice	Short
Burwell	Gaudet	McDougall	Simard
Cauchon	Gauvreau	McGee	Somerville
Chapais	Gould	McKellar	Stirton
Christie	Harwood	Morin	Tassé
Cimon	Hebert	Mowat	Thibaudeau
Clark	Hogan	Munro	Turcotte
Connor	Howland	Notman	Wallbridge
Coutlee	Jobin	Ouimet	White
Desaulniers	Labelle	Panet	Wright—64

NAYS.

Alleyn	Daly	Laporte	Rose, Sol. Gen.
Archambault	Dawson	LeBoutillier	Scott, Richard W.
Bell	Drummond	Loranger	Scott, William
Bellingham	Dufresne	Macbeth	Sherwood
Benjamin	Dunkin	Macdonald, At. Gnl.	Sicotte
Buchanan	Fellowes	McCann	Simpson
Burton	Ferguson	Morrison	Sincennes
Cameron, John	Ferres	Papineau	Smith, Sidney
Campbell	Gill	Patrick	Talbot
Carling	Gowan	Playfair	Terrill
Cayley	Heath	Pope	Tett—50
Cartier, At.G'nl	Holmes	Powell, Wm. F.	
Cook	Lacoste	Roblin	

And the question being proposed on the amendment to the original question as amended; Mr. William F. Powell moved, in amendment to the said proposed amendment, as amended, seconded by Mr. Cimon,

That the word "Ottawa" be left out, and the word "Quebec" inserted instead thereof.

Mr. Powell's motion was a question of tactics. He hoped thereby to rally the Quebec members at a later stage in support of Ottawa. Several other amendments were moved on immaterial issues chiefly to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the House.

On the following day the Government resigned and Mr. George Brown was called in to form an Administration. As soon as the new Cabinet was sworn in its members resigned their seats and sought re-election. On the motion for the issue of the several writs of election, it was moved in amendment that the words "and that this House while ordering the issue of the writ feel it their duty to declare that the Administration, the formation of which has created the vacancy, does not possess the confidence of this House and of the country" be added at the end thereof. The amendments in all cases were carried by substantial majorities. Mr. Brown pressed His Excellency for a dissolution claiming that the request was a constitutional right. His Excellency however refused to recognize that principle and the new Government had no alternative but to send in their resignation.

His Excellency first sent for Mr. Galt and requested him to form an Administration; he having failed, Mr. Cartier, who had been Attorney General for Quebec in the former Administration, was then sent for and the task committed to his hands. The members of the former Government (except three) were recalled, accepting other offices than those they originally held: Mr. Galt replacing Mr. Loranger, Mr. George Sherwood replacing Mr. Cayley and Mr. Cartier becoming Prime Minister in the room of Sir John A. Macdonald.

As the Brown-Dorion Cabinet were then seeking re-election the Reform Press denounced the action of the Governor General as a breach of constitutional rule and pointed out that the return of Mr. Cartier and his colleagues to office without re-election was in direct violation of the Constitution alleging that they dare not go back to their

constituents for approval on the accepting of office. The episode is known as the "double shuffle," and the effect of it was to still further embitter the political sentiment throughout the country. It was feared that the claims of Ottawa might be thereby prejudiced as several supporters of Ottawa were political and personal friends of the Brown-Dorion Cabinet. The session was soon after brought to a close with a vote against Ottawa of 64 to 50.

In the interval that elapsed before the next meeting of the Legislature many anxious discussions arose over Ottawa's chances, it being understood that the members of the Cabinet were not a unit in its favour. Was it reasonable to expect that they would make the selection of Ottawa a Government measure, and thus risk another defeat? That course would certainly involve a dissolution (as the double shuffle could not be repeated) and might result disastrously for Ottawa. A public meeting was held in the City Hall to consider the situation, and a Committee composed of Nicholas Sparks, C. R. Cunningham, John George Bell, Edward Griffin, Edward Smith and several others whose names cannot now be recalled was appointed to co-operate with the City member.

It was felt that unless the Government inserted a paragraph in the Speech from the throne at the approaching session the chances of success were hopeless. The Cabinet was naturally unwilling to take that stand unless it could be shown that the policy would be sustained. Members of the Assembly had therefore to be canvassed—some had to be influenced to change a former vote. Bell of Lanark, Patrick of Grenville,Cook of Dundas and Papineau of the County of Ottawa were strong political and personal friends of the Brown-Dorion Cabinet and felt indignant at the treatment meted out to that short-lived administration. After promises of support had been secured from several quarters, Mr. W. F. Powell, the member for the County, and the writer went to Toronto and interviewed the Government assuring the members of the Cabinet that if a firm stand was taken and the Queen's choice upheld they would

be sustained. At this stage on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, when the decision was reached to stand or fall by the selection of Ottawa, the Hon. Mr. Sicotte refused to concur and resigned his office thus seriously endangering the Government policy.

The House was called for the 29th January, and the general anxiety as to what the meeting would evolve may be gathered from a few extracts from the *Globe* of 27th January. It first quotes from an extra of the Ottawa *Citizen* issued on 24th January:—

Mr. Scott arrived here on Friday last from Toronto. A caucus meeting was held on Saturday evening. It is known that the ministry are again peddling with the seat of government question. They want the unconditional support of all the Ottawa members, otherwise they declare they must be careful about that question.

The Speech from the Throne will not, it is rumoured, contain any reference to the question unless under certain conditions. A deputation headed by Mayor McGillivray went up to Prescott this morning to induce Mr. Patrick, M.P., to give an unqualified support to the ministry in all their measures in consideration of their recognizing the Queen's decision.

It was for the purpose of compelling the unconditional support of Mr. Papineau that Messrs. Powell, Fellowes and Scott got up the meeting at Aylmer the other day. The meeting failed in the object intended.

A like deputation has gone out to Carleton Place to convert Mr. Bell, M.P. Their success also is easy to conjecture.

The *Globe* editorially adds, a Prescott correspondent supplies some interesting particulars:—

Mr. Scott the ministerial emissary and suitable assistants convened a hole and corner meeting at Prescott on Monday with the view of influencing Mr. Patrick's course in the coming session. An interview was had with Mr. Patrick when it was urged that an unwavering support of the ministry during the coming session by the whole body of Ottawa representatives was the only condition on which ministers could carry out the Queen's decision. It is not difficult to determine the degree of success which has so far attended Mr. Scott's mission; that his overtures were treated by Mr. Patrick otherwise than as an insult to be resented contemptuously, no one acquainted with the member for Grenville can suppose.

The first paragraph of the Speech read as follows:—

It is my duty, on the present occasion, to call your attention to the question of the seat of government of Canada.

The Legislature of Canada, having resolved that a fixed seat of government should be selected, solicited our Gracious Queen, by an Address of either House, to exercise her prerogative in making such selection.

An Act, moreover, was passed, adopting beforehand the decision of Her Majesty, and appropriating the necessary funds.

This Act of the Canadian Parliament and the decision of the Queen are binding on the Executive Government of the Province, and it will be their duty to carry out the understanding which existed at the time when the reference was made, by which the Government will be transferred to Quebec for a fixed period, until the necessary arrangements shall have been completed.

The correspondence with Her Majesty's Government will be laid before you, and I cannot doubt that you will recognize a selection made by Her Majesty at your own request, and that you will duly acknowledge Her gracious compliance with the Addresses which you yourselves caused to be presented to Her.

To this an amendment was moved by Mr. Sicotte (who had resigned his office a few days before), seconded by Mr. Langevin,

That the paragraph be left out and the following inserted instead thereof:—"The fundamental principle of the representative system, "and one of the most important advantages resulting from it, is the "right of the majority to have their views and opinions prevail in "the administration of the country; and it is the duty of this House "to repel any attempt which might endanger a principle which for "centuries has preserved, in a wise measure of progress, the fran-"chises and liberties of England. That, in declaring on the 28th "July last, 'that in the opinion of this House the City of Ottawa "'ought not to be the permanent seat of government of this Province,' "this House, without intending any want of respect to the Sovereign, "expressed its views and opinions on the subject of the seat of "government in the ordinary and constitutional exercise of its privi-"leges."

The debate continued up till the 10th February, during which anxious time the Ottawa Citizens' Committee rendered good service in the lobby at Toronto and the members for Carleton—W. F. Powell, Russell, G. B. L. Fellowes,

and the writer—passed many anxious days and nights looking after the votes. As the amendment was defeated by only five it will be realized how close the count must have been.

YEAS.

MESSIEURS

Aikins	Dorland	Laberge	Piché
Beaubien	Drummond	Laframboise	Powell, Walker
Biggar	Finlayson	Langevin	Ross
Bourassa	Foley	Lemieux	Rymal
Brown	Fortier	Loranger	Short
Bureau	Fournier	Macdonald, D. A.	Sicotte
Burwell	Gaudet	Macdonald, J. S.	Somerville
Caron	Gould	Mattice	Starnes
Cauchon	Harcourt	McDougall	Stirton
Chapais	Hartman	McGee	Tassé
Cimon	Harwood	McKellar	Thibaudeau
Clark	Hébert	Merritt	Wallbridge
Connor	Hogan	Mowat	White
Desaulniers	Howland	Munro	Wright—59
Dorion	Jobin	Notman	

NAYS.

Alleyn	Daoust	Macbeth	Robinson
Archambault	Dionne	Macdonald, At. G'l	Roblin
Baby	Dubord	MacLeod	Rose
Bell	Dufresne	McCann	Scott, Richard W.
Bellingham	Dunkin	McDonald, A. P.	Scott, William
Benjamin	Fellowes	McMicken	Sherwood
Buchanan	Ferguson	Meagher	Simard
Burton	Ferres	Morin	Simpson
Cameron, Malc.	Foster	Morrison	Sincennes
Campbell	Galt	Panet	Smith, Sidney
Carling	Gill	Papineau	Talbot
Cayley	Gowan	Patrick	Terrill
Cartier, At. Gnl	Heath	Playfair	Tett
Cook	Holmes	Pope	Turcotte
Coutlee	Labelle	Powell, Wm. F.	Webb
Daly	Lacoste	Price	Whitney—64

A change of three votes would have meant defeat which under the then existing conditions would have been a finality.

The agreement to give Quebec the benefit of the intervening period before the final move to Ottawa no doubt helped materially in securing support from that quarter. Thus ended a long and exciting episode in Canadian history, in which the prize was obtained by the city that had the fewest friends among the aspirants for the honour.

On the 1st August, 1860, His Majesty the King, then Prince of Wales, laid the corner stone of the present Parliament buildings. The departmental offices were removed from Quebec to Ottawa in the year 1865, and the first session was held at the capital in 1866.

On the union of Canada with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, clause 16 was embodied in the British North America Act which provides that "until the Queen otherwise directs, the seat of Government of Canada shall be Ottawa."

ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN

SETTING FORTH THE CLAIMS OF OTTAWA

(*See ante pp.* 28, 29)

To The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.

Most Gracious Sovereign.

We Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects of the City of Ottawa in the Province of Canada beg leave to approach the foot of the Throne with assurances of our loyalty and fidelity to the Crown of Great Britain, and of our devoted attachment to the person of Your Majesty.

We have approached the Throne on the present occasion, at the suggestion of your Majesty's Representative in Canada, to lay before our Sovereign, the claims of the City of Ottawa for selection as the future Capital for this growing Province.

Since the union of Upper and Lower Canada in the year 1840, the subject of the adoption of a permanent site for the seat of Government has continuously agitated the public mind, and has annually given rise to excited and protracted debates in the Legislature of the country, gradually developing bitter feelings of jealousy in the two sections of the Province and at times almost threatening a dissolution of the Union.

To avoid for the future an agitation so injurious to our best interests, the present Provincial Parliament have, with the concurrence of the Government, wisely resolved to refer to the judgment of our Sovereign the decision of a question that they themselves have in vain endeavoured to settle, and we beg to assure your Majesty that this judicious course is approved by a very large majority of the people of the two Canadas; convinced as they are, that in the discharge of so onerous a task, your Majesty will recognize the important bearing it will have upon the future greatness of this country, in cementing more firmly the Union of Upper and Lower Canada, in extinguishing those national jealousies that have for years past mutually existed, and in developing the illimitable resources of both sections of the Province.

That without desiring to prejudice the claims of other cities in the mind of Your Majesty, we may nevertheless be permitted succinctly to set forth reasons demonstrative of the superiority of Ottawa to every other place as a capital.

Consisting, as Canada does, of an extended line of territory lying opposite the frontier of a powerful and rapidly increasing Republic, it is of the highest importance to its protection that the seat of Government should be at some point far removed from the possibility of hostile attack in time of war, and of foreign influences on the minds of its people in time of peace, and so situated that its connection with the rest of the country could never be cut off or intercepted by an invading enemy, an argument forming an insuperable objection to Toronto and Kingston, lying as they do in an exposed position, immediately opposite American Territory, and in the event of foreign invasion, liable as they are, to be at any time dissevered from the other parts of the Province ; a similar objection may also be urged against Montreal, and with nearly equal force, for it must be conceded that Montreal fell an easy prey to an American army during the Revolutionary war, and from the present navigability of the Saint Lawrence, the descent by water from foreign Territory to that City is a task of little difficulty, and one that would require but a few hours in its accomplishment. Quebec lying also on the St. Lawrence is undoubtedly a point of great strength, but from its extreme Eastern situation and exclusive population it is rather adapted to protect the approaches to the Provinces by sea than suited for the Capital of United Canada, and the connection of both Quebec and Montreal with the rest of the country might at any time be readily severed by an invading army.

Similar objections cannot be urged aganst this city, which lies in the very heart of Canada, far removed from the American Frontier, surrounded by a loyal population composed equally of French and British origin, who have ever remained free from the stain of disaffection to the Crown of England; and which is situated on the banks of the Ottawa, the largest and most beautiful river in Your Majesty's widely extended dominions, running entirely through British Territory and forming in its course the boundary line of the upper and lower provinces.

As a central military position it stands unrivalled, its natural capabilities for defence not being even second to Quebec; and with but a moderate expenditure its fortifications could easily be made equal to that city, a knowledge of which we believe Your Majesty already possesses, from the plans and reports furnished at various times by the late Colonel By, its founder, and by other scientific military authorities, and in the once projected construction of which, that distinguished soldier, the late Duke of Wellington, is said to have taken a warm interest.

The city is connected with Montreal on the East by the Ottawa river, with Kingston on the South West by that great military work—the Rideau Canal—and when the improvements on the upper portions of the Ottawa River shall have been completed, and the connection with Lake Huron on the extreme West made navigable, a project that in a few years will doubtless be executed the City of Ottawa will be the radiating centre from which will diverge to the distant sections of Canada the great arteries of the country bearing on their waters trade and commerce during peace and affording a constant communication with the natural capital of the Province during war.

Moreover it is now united by rail with every other city in the two Canadas, a railway from Ottawa intersecting the Grand Trunk and the River St. Lawrence at the town of Prescott, thus bringing this city within seven hours of Montreal and twelve of Toronto. As a centre it is equally distant from Kingston and Montreal, from Quebec and Toronto, and when in the great future that already seems to shadow forth the destinies of this country, the Red River Valley shall be united on the one side and the Lower British Provinces on the other, it will still form the centre of that extensive empire.

Were the seat of Government permanently located in Toronto, Kingston, Montreal or Quebec, its effect would not be felt beyond the immediate limits of the metropolis, while it must be obvious that the location of it at this central point would tend to develop equally the growth of the two Canadas in the very region where a stimulus is imperatively required by attracting immigration and capital to the Ottawa valley now the only part of Canada where any large and valuable tracts of land suitable for cultivation are still held by the Crown, and thus by settling the interior giving to the Province that depth and solidity so essential to its strength, and creating for Kingston and Montreal that back country so indispensable to their prosperity, the Ottawa Valley already containing over one hundred thousand souls is capable of sustaining a population of eight millions, while it is rich in mineral wealth and possesses unlimited water power on the various tributaries of the Ottawa River.

So far back as the year 1843 the Committee of the Executive Council, when recommending the removal of the seat of Government from Kingston to Montreal, thus alluded to the claims of the city.

"Of Bytown it may be said that it is comparatively safe from attack in the interior; That when the country of the Ottawa comes to be settled it promises to raise into importance, and that it is situated on the Provincial Boundary, but then its position makes it inconvenient for both upper and lower Canadians."

The argument of inconvenience cannot now be used since the introduction of our railway which renders it easy of access from all parts of the Province.

And though a matter of minor importance it may still not be unworthy of consideration that the City of Ottawa stands unrivalled on the continent of America for the beautiful and romantic scenery of its rivers, cascades and mountains, yielding not only pleasure to the eye but keeping the atmosphere in so healthy a state that Ottawa has hitherto been comparatively free from those epidemics—cholera and fever—that have so fearfully devastated other cities of Canada.

The city contains also ample grounds in its very centre belonging to the Crown admirably suited for the requirements of the Government, with abundance of the best building material at hand, and a productive country around it to furnish the wants of the place.

In fine we conceive that situated as Ottawa is, within the territory of Upper Canada, but connected with the Lower Province by the "Union" Suspension Bridge, with a population of French and British origin equally balanced, the political and social effect of its selection would be to forever set at rest any feelings of jealousy on the part of either section, and would tend more firmly to cement a union which has already been productive of the happiest results, a conclusion your memorialists are warranted in asserting, from the frequently expressed opinions of the Lower Canadians, that next to the city they felt immediately interested in, they preferred Ottawa—and to which moreover they have never urged any objection in Parliament.

And Upper Canada would have no cause of complaint since the pledge that the seat of Government should be permanently placed within the territory of Upper Canada, said to have been tacitly given by the late Lord Sydenham when carrying out the union, would be fulfilled.

We beg to accompany this our petition with the tracing of a comprehensive map, of British America compiled from authentic sources, and again renewing our assurances of loyalty and attachment to Your Majesty, and expressing our confidence in the exercise of your wise judgment, we remain Your Majesty's devoted subjects.

Signed on behalf of the Citizens of Ottawa.

Council Chambers, 4th May, 1857.

(Sgd.) J. B. LEWIS,
Mayor.

(Sgd.) Wm. P. Lett,
City Clerk.

Copy].

No. 60. DOWNING STREET,

31 December, 1857.

SIR:—

By my despatch of the 17th April last, I informed you that Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to comply with the prayer of the address presented to Her by the Legislative Council and Assembly of Canada namely, that she would exercise the royal prerogative by the selection of some place for the permanent seat of Government in Canada.

This question has now been considered by Her Majesty and by Her Government with that attention which its great importance demanded. The statements and arguments contained in the various Memorials laid before them in consequence of Your invitation to the Mayors of the several cities chiefly interested, have been fully weighed.

I am commanded by the Queen to inform you that in the judgment of Her Majesty the City of Ottawa combines more advantages than any other place in Canada for the permanent seat of the future Government of the Province, and is selected by Her Majesty accordingly.

I have, &c.,

(Sgd.) H. LABOUCHERE.

GOVERNOR,

THE RIGHT HON. SIR E. HEAD, BT.,

Canada.